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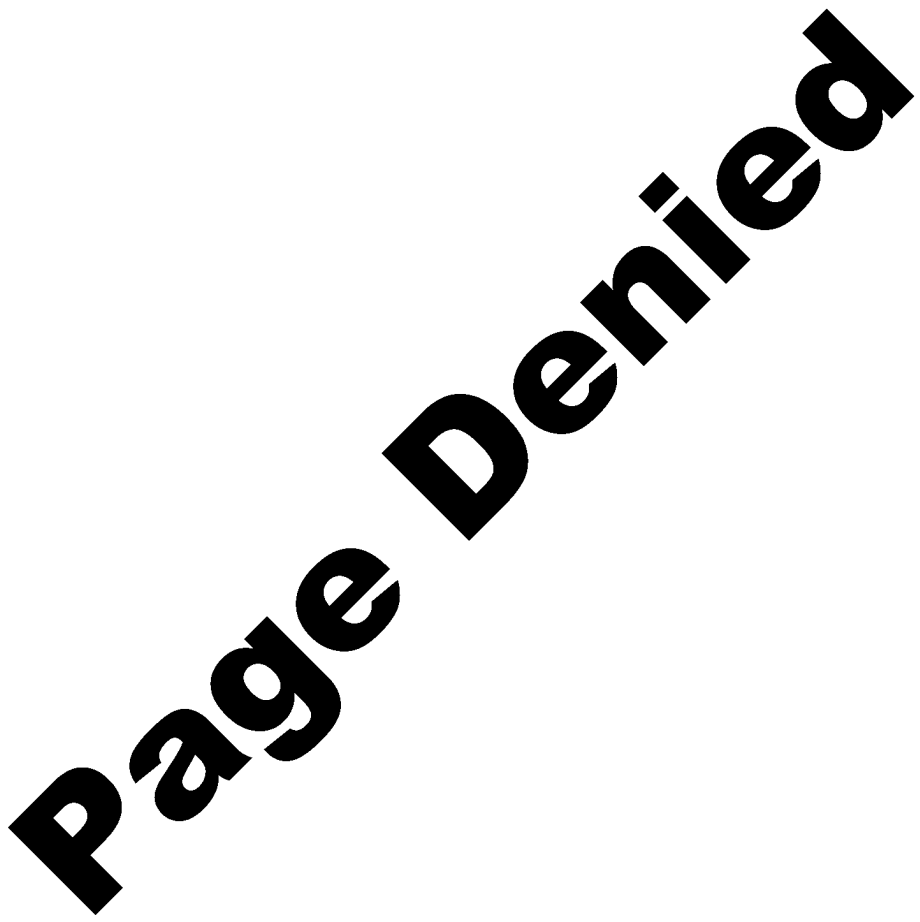

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ARNOLD BEICHMAN

The question of verification

The problem of arms negotiations with the Soviet Union is not that our experts and the Reagan administration are in "disarray." Not at all; the problem is much simpler — our negotiation theory and philosophy is in disarray and has been for a decade. I will offer as a test of my proposition the following question:

How can there be any real arms control treaty with the Soviet Union when theirs is a closed society while ours is an open society — about as open as any society ever was in all human history since the unfortunate events in the Garden of Eden? We accept as a given before we even go into the negotiations that the Soviet Union simply will not allow on-site verification of an arms control treaty while the United States is subject to on-site verification, thanks to our open society.

As far as the United States is concerned, there are few secrets, much congressional oversight of the intelligence agencies, a continued stream of published top secret documents, porous national borders north and south, Department of Justice guidelines which hamper intelligence activities, a Freedom of Information Act which even allows foreign nationals and their agents-in-place to ask for government classified documents, seepage of our best technology to the Soviet Union via third parties — need I go on?

As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, all we have going are spy-in-the-sky satellites, infrared telescopes in space and some ground stations for monitoring Soviet missile activity, although we have lost our most important ones in Iran. This panoply is known as National Technical Means but no NTM is a substitute for human judgment; no NTM can look inside the head of a Soviet leader.

There is no way the U.S. government can cheat on an arms control treaty without the national media or Congress uncovering such action. Were Yuri M. Andropov to adopt a policy of "launch-on-warning" (i.e., instead of his finger on the trigger, it would be a computer's decision), there would be no way of knowing that he had done so unless Andropov told us. Were President Reagan to adopt such a policy, it would be known in an instant, whether or not he tried to keep it a secret.

Let's face it: Are there any secrets in the National Security Council? Are covert actions really covert anymore? Is it merely a jest or tribute to a magazine's editorial ingenuity that *Aviation Week* is referred to as "Leak-of-the-Week?"

Weapons technology has changed dramatically since the first SALT treaty, but our monitoring capabilities have fallen behind such Soviet advances as increased silo reload capability, anti-satellite and laser activity, new mobile strategic missile systems, the ever-increasing number of Soviet weapons systems with intercontinental range, the fractionalization of missile warheads.

The Soviet Emperor has lots of clothes, but too many people still think it's the same old "con-game" tailors.

Everyone knows and more or less agrees on the need for verification, but everyone also knows that verification that is not on-site is no verification at all, and can even be seriously misleading if the Soviets are practicing *maskirovka*, disinformation and deception, as to what they have in their silos.

This lack of on-site verification in the U.S.S.R. while there is total on-site verification in the United States and among the European allies should make us ask whether an arms control treaty with the hermetically sealed U.S.S.R. has any meaning other than disarmament of the United States and its allies and little, if any, disarmament by the Soviet Union and its Warsaw pact allies.

When we enter arms negotiations with the Soviet Union, we go in crippled because of our willingness to accept as a fact of life that Andropov will not allow on-site verification any more than Brezhnev or Khrushchev did. So we are left with our NTMs and the Soviet's word that there will be no cheating, no misinterpretation of arms treaty clauses, no taking advantage of the treaty and, therefore, no need for self-enforcing penalties for flouting the treaty rules.

The longer the Soviet Union remains closed to inspection, as it has been since 1918, the more it can bargain with us in arms negotiations in a state of complete superiority, particularly over treaty language, so that what may seem innocuous to our negotiators may — because we know little about what the Soviets are doing secretly — be really perilous to our national security.

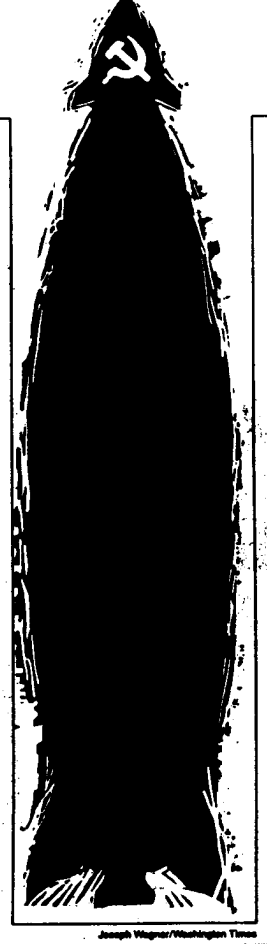
When the Ford-Kissinger-Sonnenfeldt team went ahead and signed the Helsinki agreement with the Soviets, I thought our negotiators were mad. Did they really think the Soviets would allow relaxation and civil freedoms in the Soviet Empire? Of course, the U.S.S.R. would be delighted to have the West's endorsement of their territorial seizures in Eastern Europe. This, went the Ford-Kissinger-Sonnenfeldt line, would appease the Kremlin, would give Soviet leaders a feeling of security on their Western borders so they could sleep nights. Instead it is Western Europe that can't sleep because of Soviet missiles which has become more ... since the Helsinki agreement was signed and which has put the West into a position of permanent inferiority. And with Andropov now in the saddle, will the civil freedom provisions of the Helsinki agreement be enforced? Have they *ever* been enforced?

I feel the same way about arms control agreements with the Soviet Union as I felt about the Helsinki treaty. Until the U.S.S.R. opens itself to genuine verification and inspection, treaties with them which concern their own borders are unenforceable.

No one knows this better than President Reagan or his new appointee, Kenneth L. Adelman, director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. I am stating a simple truth which every Western arms negotiator knows to be true.

You cannot trust the Soviet Union in any arms control agreement as long as there is no on-site verification there while there is total on-site verification in the United States.

Arnold Beichman is a visiting scholar at the Hoover Institution and writes widely on public affairs.



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